UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Letteratura Italiana Contemporanea

2122-3-E2001R001

Course title

Dystopian fiction. Patterns and moments of a modern literary tradition

Topics and course structure

A critical approach to literary communication. In particular, the program deals with the main features of literariness and of narrative; the monographic section will focus on one or more patterns of narratives.

The monographic section of this lecture course will focus on the negative utopia or dystopian fiction. Dystopian fiction is a typical modern literary genre: it was born in nineteenth century as the dark side of the myth of progress. Over time, this new tradition has given rise to two major tendencies: the totalitarian fiction (an oppressive and dehumanized society) and the apocalyptic fiction (the end of the world, the end of mankind). In doing so, literature has promptly registered the insurgence of new threats and dangers, from environmental disasters to catastrophic pandemic

Objectives

The main goal is to assure that the students become familiar with the close reading of texts, that includes the ability to understand semantic values, ambiguities, implicit assumptions, and therefore to appreciate both communicative principles and cultural significance.

Methodologies

Lectures and discussion. Text analysis: linguistic and rhetorical features, narrative modes, cultural patterns. Summarizing Exercises.

The didactic activity will include commentaries and discussions of texts in digital format by means of a device for the creation of annotations. All those who will not participate are required to prepare the entire novel by Aldous Huxley *Brave New World*.

Further information about teaching modality (lectures in attendance and/or distance lessons through the e-learning platform) will be provided in due time.

Online and offline teaching materials

Prerequisites:

A good high-school level in humanities; Italian and European history of the 20th century: fascism, World War II, postwar period, cold war.

Programme and references for attending students

Institutional module:

- Mario Vargas Llosa, *In Praise of Reading and Fiction, OR* Carla Benedetti, *La letteratura ci salverà dall'estinzione*
- H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*

Monographic module:

- George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-four*
- Tommaso Pincio, *Cinacittà. Memorie del mio delitto efferato*

Critical tools:

- Francesco Muzzioli, *Scritture della catastrofe. Istruzioni e ragguagli per un viaggio nelle distopie* (Meltemi), Parte prima
- *Millenovecentoottantaquattro* (Minimum fax)

Vargas Losa's text, as well of the video of the Nobel lecture, is available on www.nobelprize.org.

The programme includes also some additional texts which will be uploaded on the didactic platform.

Programme and references for non-attending students

During the Covid-19 emergency, no distinction is made between attending and non-attending students.

Assessment methods

Oral test. Evaluation is based on the following factors: pertinence and complexity, text comprehension, familiarity with the literary texts in programme, capacity for argumentation and interpretation, interaction, clarity of exposition, linguistic appropriateness, competence in technical terminology.

During the Covid emergency, all oral tests will take place online, by means of the Webex platform. The web page of the course will indicate a public link for the access of possible virtual attendees.

Office hours

Student reception by appointment: contact the professor by email. Unless otherwise indicated by the University, reception will take place online.

Programme validity

Two academic years (until February 2024)

Course tutors and assistants

dr. Federico Pianzola, post-doc